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Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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Committee against Torture
Fifty-fifth session

Summary record of the first part (public)* 1354th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 14 August 2015, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Grossman

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* The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document CAT/C/SR.1354/Add.1.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Organizational and other matters

1. **The Chairperson** said that the Committee had been granted additional meeting time as a result of the treaty body strengthening process to address its backlog of work. In its following sessions, therefore, the Committee would dedicate that time to the consideration of communications, of which it expected to receive approximately 30.

2. At its fifth-fifth session, the Committee had adopted concluding observations on Iraq, Slovakia and Switzerland. It had appointed Ms. Gaer as focal point for the question of genocide to liaise with the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng. It had adopted the guidelines on the follow-up procedure on concluding observations, which it should continue to discuss and review. Follow-up was essential in order to assist States parties in implementing their recommendations, and dialogue with them was not restricted to meetings with delegations. It had also adopted the guidelines on the receipt and handling of allegations of reprisals against individuals and organizations cooperating with the Committee under article 13, 19, 20 and 22 of the Convention. In that respect, it had established rapporteurs on reprisals with a view to carrying out more focused evaluations of its procedure. Furthermore, the Committee had been the first to incorporate the Guidelines against Intimidation or Reprisals ("San José Guidelines") into its guidelines on reprisals. The Committee had begun its assessment of the list of issues prior to reporting procedure and it would continue that work, which had begun on a positive note, at the fifty-sixth session. Further criteria and material had been collected in order to evaluate the procedures for processing petitions.

3. At the forthcoming session, the Committee would begin work on a new general comment, the topic of which had yet to be agreed. A joint meeting with the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment would be held, centred on issues concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and intersex persons. Briefings would also be held with NGOs, inter alia to increase cooperation among international bodies and encourage NGO representatives to report to the Committee and assist in the follow-up procedures. Various organizations had requested an expert meeting with the Committee and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) to discuss redress and fair trials. In addition, in 2016, a briefing would take place with the World Organisation Against Torture concerning the collection of data on torture victims to promote rehabilitation, accountability and prevention. He commended the work that the Committee had carried out during its fifty-fifth session, emphasizing that constant assessment was essential in order to improve all its procedures.

4. **Mr. Sands** (Association for the Prevention of Torture) congratulated the Committee on its ongoing work and on the introduction of a number of new procedures and working methods. He welcomed the invitation to national preventive mechanisms to come before the Committee to share good practices. Civil society as a whole welcomed the imminent development and adoption of a new general comment, as mentioned by the Chairperson, and he looked forward to cooperating with the Committee in that regard.

5. **The Chairperson** said that, at the present session, the Committee had benefited from the additional time it had been granted to enter into dialogue with various stakeholders, including national human rights institutions, with a view to receiving an insight into their operation and to in turn increase its effectiveness. He expressed his thanks to the Association for the Prevention of Torture and, in that respect, noted the meeting that had been held with the Convention against Torture Initiative, with the

participation of a number of ambassadors and representatives, to discuss measures being developed to enhance compliance with the Convention. He also expressed his thanks to the World Organisation Against Torture for the fruitful briefing, which had enabled the Committee to gather new ideas regarding the challenges and issues presented by article 3.

6. **Mr. Gillibert** (Secretariat) said that a date had yet to be confirmed for the meeting with the World Organisation Against Torture in 2016. A meeting with States parties would be held in April or May 2016.

7. **The Chairperson** emphasized the importance of creating a space to experiment with ideas about procedures and engage in valuable strategic discussion with NGOs and States parties with a view to promoting the Convention.

8. **Ms. Gaer** said that the closed press conference that would be held following the present meeting could be followed through an audio recording on the United Nations website.

The public part of the meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.